

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 NIC-01 OMB-01 AID-20

IO-14 OIC-04 COME-00 EB-11 STR-08 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /141 W
----- 027807

O R 032117Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 550

INFO GOV PANCANAL

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PANAMA 2551

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PN, PFOR

SUBJ: ATMOSPHERE FOR CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH TREATY NEGOTIATIONS DID NOT RECEIVE INTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE DURING THE PAST MONTH, THE TREATMENT GIVEN THEM WAS ON BALANCE FAVORABLE IN TONE. THE THURMOND RESOLUTION HOWEVER RECEIVED CONTINUING CRITICISM. PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED GREAT SATISFACTION CONCERNING THE MEETINGS THAT FOREIGN MINISTER TACK HAD WITH AMBASSADOR BUNKER, SECRETARY KISSINGER AND VICE PRESIDENT FORD AND THIS SATISFACTION WAS REFLECTED IN PRESS COVERAGE OF THE MEETINGS. AS FOR THE NEXT SERIES OF TACK-BUNKER MEETINGS IN LATE MAY, A PANAMANIAN OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN IN WASHINGTON WAS QUOTED AS HAVING SAID THAT BASIC DECISIONS CONCERNING THE NEGOTIATIONS AND PERHAPS THE TREATY ITSELF WILL BE MADE THEN. IN A SPEECH ON APRIL 30 TORRIJOS HAD TOUGH WORDS ABOUT THE "COLONIALIST ENCLAVE", AND SAID IF NEGOTIATIONS FAIL, PANAMA WOULD "TRY LIBERATION"; HOWEVER, HE DESCRIBED THE AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPLES IN POSITIVE TERMS. WE SENSE A MOOF OF OPTIMISM AMONG PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS WHICH MAY REFLECT INCREASED CONFIDENCE IN THEMSELVES, TOP U S OFFICIALS AND THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

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1. FOREIGN MINISTER TACK'S RECENT TALKS IN WASHINGTON WITH AMB. BUNKER, SECRETARY KISSINGER AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR WERE GIVEN PROMINENT AND FAVORABLE TREATMENT IN THE PANAMA CITY PRESS APRIL 26 AND 27. THE FEATURE STORIES QUOTED A SPOKESMAN FOR THE PANAMANIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WHO DESCRIBED THE MEETINGS AS "POSITIVE" AND "VERY USEFUL." PANAMANIAN OFFICIAL WHO ACCOMPANIED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO WASHINGTON HAS CONFIRMED TO US THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS PLEASED WITH HIS RECEPTION AND THE MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT TACK HAD BEEN QUOTED ON CHANNEL 2 TV NEWS APRIL 30 AS HAVING SAID A DRAFT TREATY MIGHT BE READY BY NOVEMBER 1974. THIS WAS NOT PICKED UP IN THE PRESS.

2. CONCERNING THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE PRESS ARTICLES REFERRED TO ABOVE QUOTED THE PANAMANIAN EMBASSY SPOKESMAN AS SAYING THAT PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATORS AMB. GONZALEZ-REVILLA AND DR. CARLOS LOPEZ GUEVARA WERE WORKING WITH U S COUNTERPARTS AT A TECHNICAL LEVEL IN DEVELOPING ISSUES (MATERIALS) RELATED TO THE EIGHT POINTS AND WERE DEVELOPING A WORKING METHODOLOGY IN WHICH PRIORITY WOULD BE GIVEN TO THE THEME OF JURISDICTION. THEY WOULD WORK IN WASHINGTON FOR A FEW DAYS, THEN COME TO PANAMA FOR 20 DAYS OF MEETINGS FOLLOWING WHICH - TOWARD THE END OF MAY - AMBASSADOR BUNKER WOULD AGAIN COME TO PANAMA. "CIRCLES VERY CLOSE TO THE NEGOTIATORS" WERE REPORTEDLY ASSIGNING MUCH IMPORTANCE TO THE SERIES OF TACK-BUNKER MEETINGS IN MAY, BECAUSE DECISIONS "ABOUT CONCRETE SUBJECTS RELATING TO THE NEGOTIATIONS AND PERHAPS THE TREATY ITSELF" WOULD BE MADE DURING THOSE MEETINGS. AS EVIDENCE OF THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WAS NOW GIVING THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE SPOKESMAN REPORTEDLY CITED AN AGREEMENT FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER AND FOREIGN MINISTER TACK TO MEET EACH TIME A STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH BUNKER IS COMPLETED TO REVIEW THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED.

3. AN AP WIRE SERVICE REPORT GIVING EX-AMBASSADOR JACK VAUGHN'S VIEW THAT THE PENTAGON AND THE CONGRESS WERE THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLES TO A NEW TREATY RECEIVED FEATURE COVERAGE IN THE INDEPENDENT LA ESTRELLA AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE STAR AND HERALD ON APRIL 30. OTHERWISE, NEGOTIATIONS HAVE NOT RECENTLY RECEIVED PROMINENT TREATMENT IN THE LOCAL PRESS. ALTHOUGH THE THURMOND RESOLUTION HAS RECEIVED CONTINUING CRITICAL MENTION

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IN THE PRESS ARTICLES CONCERNING THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY SENATOR GALE MCGEE, WHILE STIMULATING HEADLINES INITIALLY, HAS RECEDED FROM PUBLIC ATTENTION. AN AP STORY BY GEORGE GEDDA APPEARED APRIL 16, CITING A SENIOR U S OFFICIAL IN WASHINGTON AS SAYING THE U S DOES NOT HAVE SOVEREIGNTY IN THE CANAL ZONE, THUS, ACCORDING TO GEDDA, CONTRADICTING THE CLAIMS BEING MADE BY SENATOR THURMOND AND HIS COLLEAGUES.

4. PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS HAVE INFORMED US IN CONFIDENCE THAT THEY ARE WORKING ON PLANS DESIGNED TO ALLAY THE FEARS OF U S RESIDENTS OF THE CANAL ZONE DURING A PERIOD OF TRANSITION TO PANAMANIAN JURISDICTION. APPARENTLY, THEY ENVISION THAT SPECIAL PRIVILEGES WILL BE GRANTED TO ZONE RESIDENTS. WE DO NOT HAVE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THESE PLANS.

5. RECENT NEGATIVE COMMENTS ON U S INTENTIONS TOWARD PANAMA APPEARED IN THE LUIS RESTREPO (MATUTINO) AND JOAQUIN BELENO (EL PANAMA AMERICA) COLUMNS DURING AND AFTER THE WASHINGTON FOREIGN MINISTERS AND THE ATLANTA, OAS MEETINGS. RESTREPO ACCUSED THE U S OF VACILLATING IN CARRYING OUT "COMMITMENT" MADE AT TLATELOLCO AND WROTE THAT THAT "WELL PLACED SOURCES" ASSERTED THAT THE U S HAD USED ALL OF ITS RESOURCES TO TRY TO BREAK LATIN AMERICA" SOLIDARITY ON THE PANAMA CANAL ISSUE AND THAT THE ATTITUDE OF THE SENATE FACTION HEADED BY SENATOR THURMOND WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A PRESSURE TACTIC USED BY THE U S TO DIVIDE LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS.

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 NIC-01 OMB-01 AID-20

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PANAMA 2551

6. GENERAL TORRIJOS IN A SPEECH BEFORE THE BANANA WORKERS UNION CONVENTION ON APRIL 30 LINKED IMPOSITION OF THE BANANA TAX TO THE CANAL ZONE PROBLEM BY SAYING THAT FAILURE TO WIN THE BATTLE OVER THE BANANA TAX WOULD BE TO ADMIT IMPLICITLY THAT

PANAMA DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO WIN THE MAIN BATTLE TO ERADICATE THE "COLONIAL" ENCLAVE. HE DESCRIBED AND DWELLED ON THE COLONIAL ENCLAVE THEME AND ENDED BY SAYING PANAMA WAS IN THE PROCESS OF DECOLONIZATION. THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE THE MEANS BEING USED NOW, BUT IF THEY FAIL, THEN "WE WILL TRY LIBERATION." HE DESCRIBED THE AGREEMENT ON 8 POINTS IN POSITIVE TERMS SAYING IT HAS A "NONCOLONIALIST STRUCTURE", LEADING TOWARD THE FINAL OBJECTIVE OF THE "PANAMANIZATION" OF THE CANAL. THE SPEECH, ALTHOUGH CRITICAL, BROKE NO NEW GROUND AND WAS OF THE KIND ONE CAN EXPECT FROM TORRIJOS ON SUCH OCCASIONS.

7. COMMENT: THE OVERALL CLIMATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS REMAINS GOOD AND WAS PROBABLY IMPROVED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S EXPERIENCES IN WASHINGTON. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS WE SENSE MORE OPTIMISM CONCERNING THE OUTCOME OF TREATY NEGOTIATIONS THAN WE HAVE NOTICED IN THE PAST. THIS APPEARS TO REFLECT INCREASED CONFIDENCE IN THEMSELVES, IN TOP U S OFFICIALS AND IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. THE OPTIMISM DOES NOT APPEAR CONFIDENTIAL

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TO BE BASED UPON ILLUSIONS THAT DRAMATIC CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE U S POSITION.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Errors: N/A
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To: STATE
Type: TE
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